

# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August, and September, by Loyola University Press, 3441 North Ashland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.  
Rev. James A. Kleist, S. J., Editor. Subscription price: \$1.00 a Year.

Entered as second class matter December 14, 1927, at the post office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879.

Vol. XI

APRIL, 1935

No. 7

## The Value of Horace to the Historian

The notable dearth of first-class evidence from contemporaries for the whole reign of Augustus makes it possibly worth while to investigate how much history can be distilled from the poems of Horace. The process will, probably, most of all resemble a distillation in its results, for the mere statement of what Horace would accept as a philosophy of life is not strictly history, and yet it fills a large place in his poems.

Tiridates and the Geloni, Dacian and Moor, even a Briton or two—is there any point in their mention, or are they merely so much poetic lumber that a diligent maker of verses used to please his contemporaries and then allowed to be stowed away as not needed for the “brazen monument”? Did Horace think of the possibility that a post-imperial Moor might one day write a commentary on him, and have to pass quickly over the slights to his own race? Did he realize that there were Moors alive, and not merely in a universe of discourse? If such poetical trimmings were the only history we could find in Horace, the attempt would be scarcely valuable. Perhaps there is more.

A striking instance of the way in which a poem can be used to supply the evidence that would decide a crucial point in historical research has been recently furnished by an article in *The Journal of Roman Studies*.<sup>1</sup> Here Mr. Tarn has shown how a coherent account of the battle of Actium can be won from the lines:

Hostiliumque navium portu latent  
puppes sinistrorsum citae.

*Epod.*, ix, 19-20

The meaning Mr. Tarn would give them is simply: “Enemy ships on the left wing (their left) have gone back to harbour and stay there.” In other words, the Antonian left wing deserted at some moment of the battle. Now this stands in direct contrast, if not contradiction, to the other poem on Actium:<sup>2</sup> *Vix una sospes navis ab ignibus*. The Antonian fleet cannot have been burnt and have surrendered also, unless it was burnt after surrender. Thus beneath the later account of panegyricizing tendency, which magnifies the victory of Augustus, Horace in his first and more truthful account enables us to see that in reality Antony was betrayed. Antony had tried with his right to turn the opponent's left, where Agrippa was in command. The move was countered, and there was fighting on that wing. An accident, described in the Elder Pliny,<sup>3</sup> caused Antony to change from his own ship to another. His left, not yet engaged, interpret this as a sign of flight, and desert. Horace writes the epode at Rome on receiving the news,

while yet ignorant of the direction of Antony's escape. Later policy leads Augustus to make out that the battle was won by valour and skill, and Horace dutifully writes an ode to bear witness to the fact. This interpretation, worked out in much greater detail by Mr. Tarn, will no doubt receive further development in the forthcoming tenth volume of *The Cambridge Ancient History*.<sup>4</sup> This is a clear case of the poet having the last word in a matter of history.

The career of Lollius is touched upon by Horace at various points in his work, and usually in a friendly spirit. This is of some importance in estimating the view Augustus took of the *clades Lollianae*. To some this has been the turning point in Augustan policy, when a forward movement was abandoned, and the *consilium coercendi intra terminos imperii* first devised. But we have only Velleius to make us think badly of Lollius, and fortunately Horace does not support him. He can therefore be passed over as being once again guilty of taking the opinions and prejudices of Tiberius for facts, to the damage of a worthy officer. But what is the testimony of Horace on the point? In *Od.* IV, ix, he praises the man after the so-called disaster has taken place, in a collection of poems that was brought out at the special request of Augustus.

Est animus tibi  
rerumque prudens et secundis  
temporibus dubiisque rectus,  
vindex avarae fraudis et abstinens . . .

Horace is careful to belittle the *clades* as being nothing more than *res dubiae* and *labores tui*. Hence even though Augustus thought it necessary to visit the Gallie provinces in person after Lollius had been discomfited by the raiding Sugambri in B. C. 16, the historian is inclined with Horace to make light of the affair rather than with Velleius to say:<sup>5</sup>

Accepta in Germania clades sub legato M. Lollio, homine in omnia pecuniae quam recte faciendi cupidior, et inter summam vitiorum dissimulationem vitiosissimo, amissaque legionis quintae aquila, vocavit ab Urbe in Gallias Caesarem.

It is well known that Velleius is a blind admirer of Tiberius, and that Lollius was afterwards sent out to the East as *moderator* to the young C. Caesar, who was entrusted with a mission that might more naturally have been given to Tiberius. Both the moderator and his charge die in obscure and perhaps suspicious circumstances while in the East (Lollius in A. D. 1, C. Caesar after a long illness in A. D. 4), and in A. D. 2 Tiberius returns from his retirement at Rhodes to take up a leading position in Roman affairs. Here is surely sufficient

explanation of the animus of Velleius, and when we find in the Chronicle of Eusebius and in Obsequens an alternative version of the military activities of Lollius in Germany, we can rest assured that Horace is telling us the truth. These later writers<sup>6</sup> tell us: *Insidiis Romanorum Germani circumventi; sub M. Lollio legato graviter vexati*, and *Germanos in arma versos M. Lollius superat*. But without the support of Horace these late notices would be powerless against the vehemence of Velleius.

Lollius meets us again in the poems. The second epistle in the first book may be addressed to him, the eighteenth almost certainly is. Editors have been misled by the line:

Saevam militiam puer et Cantabrica bella tulisti,  
Epp., I, xviii, 55,

where the reference of *puer* is not to what follows, but to the *saeva militia*, which, if the adjective be given full value, means the civil war. This would be quite natural that Lollius should have fought on the side of the Caesars, 44-31 B. C., and then in the Cantabrian war of 25 B. C., afterwards being one of those loyal henchmen to whom Augustus could safely entrust the consulship,<sup>7</sup> when he had decided not to hold it himself, and still mistrusted the older families. When Lollius is thus taken to be no longer a boy in the time of the Cantabrian war, there is no difficulty in referring this eighteenth epistle to him, and we begin to form a clearer picture of the man, a natural ally for Horace, self-made, with no trailing cloud of ancestors, and with a similar devotion to the Emperor. There were many such, and we are slowly beginning to find out more about them. Agrippa and Maecenas have also been known to us, but now there is more to say of such men as Statilius Taurus, Sentius Saturninus, Vinicius, Quirinius, and, thanks to Horace, M. Lollius; and on these men Augustus so much depended, that the first beginnings of the principate have been called rather a syndicate than the rule of one man.

It is quite possible that some day we shall find out more about the youth of Horace, just as we have about that of Vergil.<sup>8</sup> The *docta dicta Sironis* may come to light from beneath Herculaneum, and the ideology of the small intellectualist republican clique to which both Vergil and Horace belonged, may be made clear to us. But in the meantime there is one line of Horace where he speaks of his past more clearly than do his biographers. People were jealous, he says,

quod mihi pareret legio Romana tribuno.  
Sat., I, vi, 48

The commentators will have it that Horace commanded a mere cohort of 600 men, as if he were living under Claudius, when the military tribunate was first fixed as a regular step in the career of young men of senatorial or equestrian family. The tribunes had been the original commanders of legions under the consuls, and it is only with Julius Caesar and on his side in the civil war that we find *legati legionis*, and there is no evidence that in the republican army of Brutus and Cassius this Caesarian innovation was followed. On the contrary, we have this clear statement of Horace that he had com-

manded a legion, and that ought to be enough for the historian. There were nineteen legions in the republican army at Philippi; and we are therefore justified in looking on Horace as one of the first twenty republican leaders in order of importance, however we may be able to account for his reaching that position, or for his later abandonment of the cause. One other piece of evidence that goes to show that tribunes could still command legions is given in the epitome of Livy, under the year 10 B. C., where the epitomator has selected as one of the salient facts of the year that two of the leaders of a Gallic tribe became in that year tribunes in the Roman army. It would seem at least strange if this meant no more than the command of a paltry 600 men.

This comparatively high position of Horace in the army of Brutus explains the circumstances of *Sat. I, vii*. The scene in the courthouse at Clazomenae has been sketched by an eye-witness, and it would be natural to suppose that Horace had gone there in the capacity of a *comes* to Brutus, as one of the *cohors* whom Persius tries to flatter. Having gone to Asia with Brutus, as *comes*, Horace would quite naturally become one of his legionary commanders when war broke out. No wonder the aristocrats disliked him, and were unwilling to notice him as a poet until the new aristocracy of Augustus gave him its support.

If Horace was regarded as an ill-bred, starveling turncoat by the remnant of the old aristocracy after the proscriptions and again after Actium, his attitude to Augustus and his *command-performances* on behalf of the new regime become more intelligible, if no more commendable. There has been a recent attempt to make out that Horace was no time-serving propagandist. Prof. Rostovtzeff writes:<sup>9</sup> "To my mind there is not a shadow of doubt that the term 'bureau of propaganda,' used by some modern scholars to characterize the activity of the Augustan poets, is utterly wrong. But if we allow that Vergil and Horace were working in concert with Maecenas and Augustus and setting themselves to spread the ideas of these two men and to advocate their schemes—which seems to me too narrow a view—we must say that their propaganda was entirely successful. Their enormous popularity all through the Roman world is eloquent testimony. No propaganda can be successful unless it grasps the prevailing mood of the masses. We may be quite sure that the leading ideas of Vergil and Horace were the ideas of thousands and thousands in the Roman empire." One might take this as a defence of Horace, on the ground that he was not deceiving people against their will in promising them good times if they would accept the Augustan administration. But even so, there remains the charge that possibly Horace did not believe the promises himself. The answer to this charge must be, as suggested above, that there was nothing else in which Horace could believe. He could not possibly look for salvation from the decadent aristocrats, and they did not want him; while on the other hand, all his sympathies, and his best advantage, lay with the new men who had shown him the way to success when he, commander of a non-existent legion, had finally despaired of the republic. If the historian may con-

clude from this that Horace was possessed of a certain sincerity in all his cynicism, that is of more importance for him than the knowledge that his readers believed him, since it means that some reliance can be placed upon his statements, threats, and promises.

The warning against the rebuilding of Troy is generally laughed at by the critics; but there are reasons for thinking that Horace was meeting a real danger, one of the many that beset Augustus because he was the successor of Julius. The "Gleichschaltung" of the empire, involving the removal of all privileges from Italy and the transfer of the capital to a more central point such as Troy or Alexandria, these were all notions of the great dictator; and Augustus, who was *italianissimo*, not anxious to see them fulfilled, had to say something about them to satisfy the dictator's numerous admirers. Horace, not being one of these (he mentions Julius but once), could be trusted to lay the ghost, and did so.<sup>10</sup> The critics who, with Wickham, object to this interpretation of the ode, fail to realize the strength of the united testimony of Vergil, Livy, and Horace.<sup>11</sup>

Another piece of propaganda, where the sincerity of Horace is to be supposed, is the preceding ode, III, ii. Here Horace is giving support to the measures taken for reforming the *ordo equestris*. These are noticed in Suetonius,<sup>12</sup> and no doubt needed for their success the cooperation of the poets, who exhorted the suffering public to higher ideals with all the efficacy of a modern broadcasting expert. But those who see in the words,

mos et lex maculosum edomuit nefas,  
laudantur simili prole puerperae,  
*Od.*, IV, v, 22, 23,

a proof of the satisfactory working of the *lex Julia de adulteriis*, reckon without the Horatian irony. Even if Horace believed that the principate was good for Rome, and his readers were willing to follow him in this, that does not warrant the historian's taking every word of the poem as fact. It might of course be said that he would not dare be ironical at the expense of the emperor, but the truth is that the emperor liked irony and even asked to have himself introduced in one of the *sermones* or satires.<sup>13</sup>

What might be called the official Horace, then, or his public face, is of value to the historian, though not always reliable, and incidental remarks in his other poems can be used for the history which the writer has unconsciously put into them, but the greater part of what Horace wrote is conceived as if it were

his greatest plot  
to plant the bergamot.

Shouts of *io triumphe* and boasts at the cost of Dacian and Ethiop are as little indicative of the state of the times as the "Heil Hitler" chorus of the German press or the various songs in praise of *giovinetza*. There was an ancient quarrel between poets and philosophers in the time of Plato, but we do not hear of any trouble then between poet and historian, nor since that time, largely because their lines of progress never intersected: but if there is to be much more of this modern fancy for treating the poets as the raw material of the his-

torian, and it is indulged unwisely, then we shall have another outbreak and shall see the historian driven to seek aid of the philosopher to his own defence. It may be hoped that this insignificant attempt to use a poet for other purposes will not start the trouble and will leave Helicon in peace.

Stonyhurst College,  
Blackburn, England.

J. H. CREHAN, S. J.

#### NOTES

1. 1931, part 1.
2. *Od.*, I, xxxvii, 13.
3. *Nat. Hist.*, 32, 3.
4. This volume of the *Camb. Anc. Hist.* has since appeared and treats the matter succinctly on pp. 104 and 105 (*Editor's Note*).
5. *Vell. Pat.*, 2, 97.
6. *Obsequens*, ap. *Vell. edit. Delf.*; and *Euseb., Chron. Pasch.* 314.
7. *21 B. C.*, Cf. *Epp.*, I, xx.
8. Rostagni in *Riv. di fil. Class.*, 1933, pp. 145-154.
9. *Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire*, p. 44.
10. *Od.*, III, iii.
11. *Aen.*, xii, 824-828. *Livy* v, 24.
12. *Div. August.*, 39.
13. *Suet., Vita Horat.*

#### Book Review

**Proficiency Tests and Workbook for Second-Year Latin**, by Lillian Gay Berry. Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934. Pp. 142. Price 56c.

This attractively printed manual is intended for use with any second-year Latin course. A number of tests covering the work of the first year, together with others appropriate to second year, form about half the text. The remainder of the workbook is taken up with tests applicable to Caesar. The author carefully stresses the usual benefits to be derived from the study of Latin, such as knowledge of the language, besides acquaintance with Roman history, literature, society, mythology and political life; dependence of modern languages upon Latin, etc. Since the manual is a "workbook," it might have been improved by offering suggestions as to how a student might supplement his knowledge of Latin through additional readings. Even so it will be welcomed by teachers who see in the use of "proficiency tests" and "workbooks" a solution of some of their problems of teaching.

St. Louis University,  
St. Louis, Mo.

JOHN ANTHONY KERANS

The author of the article on "High School Latin in Retrospect," which appeared in the November number of the BULLETIN, has received the following comment from "Captain B." (Buck), of the Western Military Academy, Alton, Illinois: "I have read and reread your article several times and carefully underlined all the pedagogical suggestions from the student's point of view. Plenty of food for thought. No doubt you are aware of the present trend in education. We have so many new prophets proclaiming their wares in such vehement language that it almost borders on the ridiculous. *Viel Geschrei aber wenig Woll.*"

As the raw material of poetry, the Greek language stands alone.—Mackail



# The Classical Bulletin

Published monthly except July, August, and September by  
LOYOLA UNIVERSITY PRESS

3441 North Ashland Avenue, Chicago, Illinois

Subscription price: \$1.00 a year

Entered as second class matter December 14, 1927, at the post  
office at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of March 3, 1879

## EDITOR

James A. Kleist, S. J.  
St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

## ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Francis A. Preuss, S. J. . . . . St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Mo.  
Joseph A. Walsh, S. J. . . . . Milford Novitiate, Milford, Ohio  
Aloysius A. Jacobsmeyer, S. J. . . . .

..... St. Stanislaus Seminary, Florissant, Mo.

## BUSINESS EDITOR

E. Joseph Gough, S. J. . . . . 3441 N. Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill.  
and St. Louis University, St. Louis, Mo.

## OFFICERS OF THE MISSOURI PROVINCE CLASSICAL ASSOCIATION

President: Joseph A. Walsh, S. J., Milford, Ohio  
Secretary: Alphonse M. Zamara, S. J., Milford, Ohio

Vol. XI

APRIL, 1935

No. 7

## Editorial

"College men fail because they do not know the meaning of English words." This was the conclusion which emerged from another one of those recent investigations into the efficacy of our educational work. Really, it is a continual surprise to find how few people have an accurate idea of the meaning of those words which lie just beyond the colloquial. English teachers have come in for much criticism in recent years on account of this failure, but it does not all seem to be the fault of English departments. The old saying is still true: "A man who knows only one language does not know even that one well." One of the most effective means of learning English is translation from Latin into English and, especially, from English into Latin. Anyone who has attempted a considerable quantity of such translation knows what startling gaps it often reveals in his knowledge of English; how often it sends him to the dictionary to look up common words which he has read and written for years. When he is suddenly faced with the outspoken plainness and accuracy of Latin, with its formal rigidity and simple vocabulary, he cannot merely translate words; the vagueness that is possible in ordinary English speech simply must be focussed to clarity. Let anyone who is skeptical about the matter try it.

The result is that we strip the vision of its primordial quality and take it as nothing but a symptom. The pregnant chaos then shrinks to the proportion of a psychic disturbance.

Put that into classical Latin! Or try this:

By satisfaction is meant this recovery of the equilibrium pattern, consequent upon changes of environment due to the interactions with the active demands of the organism.

You cannot put a vague impression into classical Latin; in order to translate these sentences you must know exactly what they mean. "Environment," for example, is a common enough word, yet its real meaning will be

well explored (perhaps with new discoveries) by the time you have found the right Latin phrase to translate it. The intrinsic value of this sort of work is quite evident to those who have done it. *Expertus potest credere*. And let no one say that German or French translation will serve as well. That is simply not true; and a man who believes it may know very well the worth of translation in general, but he does not know what good Latin translation involves. It would be well, indeed, to reinstate in our schools the practice of Latin proses, and even to extend it where it already exists. Our courses have been watered down sufficiently; let us retain some of the rigid disciplines that can produce results. The generally acknowledged failure of many schools to equip their students with a reliable and adequate linguistic instrument in their own mother tongue is, indeed, a crying shame to education. A thorough grasp of English, if missed in youth, can hardly be gained in after years. Elegance, force, and the other graces of style may perhaps come with time and practice: a fundamental mastery of language can be acquired only by rigid training in the plastic period of a man's life. Without this acquirement a man has but a poor channel for the reception of new ideas and an ineffective instrument for thought and speech.

Like an invigorating breeze from the West, comes the January (1935) number of *The Owl*, a monthly literary supplement of *The Santa Clara*. The University of Santa Clara is to be congratulated on this latest proof of its traditional devotion to the classics, for this splendid issue of *The Owl* is entirely dedicated to Horace and the classics. Besides several popular essays on the value of the classics in education, on Lucretius, and the Greek dramatists, there is an account of "Horace's Friendships," a paper on "Horace and the Drama," in which certain points of the *Ars Poetica* are applied to present-day plays and playwrights, a bright and chatty essay on "Maecenas and the Farm," a very thoughtful estimate of Horace under the caption "Do We Really Know Horace?" accompanied by a version of the *Solvitur Acris Hiems* of unusual merit, and finally, a clever metamorphosis of Tennyson's ode *To Virgil* into a graceful apostrophe to Horace, from which we quote the closing lines:

I salute thee with my verses,  
With my feeble, distant cry,  
Thee, the sweetest of all lyrists  
From the Roman nation sprung,  
Sweetest minstrel of the Muses  
Gifted with immortal tongue.

The whole issue illustrates the literary approach to the study of the classics and is in the genuine humanistic tradition, while at the same time preserving the characteristic airiness of the Far West.

The mark of genius is not merely a capacity for taking pains, but a delight in taking them. It sets itself hard tasks, is its own severest critic, and insists upon the best it knows.—"Imaal"

### Horace and the *Deus ex Machina*

All criticism of the tragic device, the *deus ex machina*, takes as its starting point the dictum of Aristotle. He was naturally averse to it—naturally, because as a device it lends itself very easily to abuse. In fact, he was inclined to judge its use, in whatever degree, an abuse. His view, set forth in the well known passage of the *Poetics* (1454a-1454b), is as follows: "It is evident that the unravelling of the plot, no less than the complication, must arise out of the plot itself; it must not be brought about by the *deus ex machina*—as in the *Medea* or in the *Return of the Greeks* in the *Iliad*. The *deus ex machina* should be employed only for events external to the drama—for antecedent or subsequent events, which lie beyond the range of human knowledge, and which require to be reported or foretold; for to the gods we ascribe the power of seeing all things. Within the action there must be nothing irrational. If the irrational cannot be excluded it should be outside the scope of the tragedy."

With this criticism Horace evidently is in agreement. His view is put forward in the course of his general analysis of dramatic technique in the *De Arte Poetica* (191 f.):

nec deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus  
inciderit.

It is probable that the inferior poets of Horace's own day resorted to the device whenever the occasion permitted, hence his admonition was necessary.

Orelli's note to this passage gives Cicero's observation on it in the *De Natura Deorum* (I, 53): *ut tragici poetae cum explicare argumenti exitus non potestis confugitis ad deum*. Cicero addresses himself to Balbus, the representative of the Stoics, criticizing their views of the origin of the world.

Before Aristotle's day judgment had been rendered frequently on this feature of dramatic technique, but the judgment presents no minute analysis of it as an artistic device. In a recent article in the *Philological Quarterly* the present writer has summarized the criticisms made by the comic poets and others. Aristophanes twice takes occasion to poke a little fun at the ease with which the tragic poet resorts to it to solve his tangled plots: in the *Acharnians*, Euripides is "rolled out" as on a machine, like a god in one of his tragedies, to meet Diaecopolis; in the *Thesmophoriazusae*, Agathon is brought out in the same manner and Euripides is made to fly through the air. Other comic poets also found that they could raise a laugh by satirizing the device. Antiphanes, in his drama *Poesis*, makes it almost a bit of sleight of hand. Alexis' notices it in a rather undignified association. The passage is preserved in Athenaeus (VI, 226 C). The comic fragment sings the praises of a legislator Aristoniceus, who enacted a law that fish-sellers should not dispose of their goods sitting down, but should continue standing as they plied their trade. It was his intention the next year, he said, to enact a law that they should hang, and "then they would be selling their wares as from a machine, like the gods."

Erasmus, in the passage cited, gives other references in literature to the device. Plutarch (*Lys. XXV*, p. 447) represents Lysander as expressing the view that the public man must use fear and imposture to impress citizens whom he would influence, "making up for the citizens oracles and heaven-sanctioned sayings, as the tragic poet impresses by raising aloft the machine." Lucian, as might be expected, took occasion to make fun of it. In his *Philopseudus* (29) he hails the appearance of the Pythagorean Arignotus to end an argument as being like the appearance of the "god from the machine."

An echo of the criticism is heard among the later historians. Eunapius<sup>2</sup> tells the story of the negotiations of Julian with the Chamavi whom he had subdued. Julian holds the king's son as a hostage and pretends to the father that he has slain him. When the father's grief is at its height and he can offer nothing to the Emperor to ensure his good faith, Julian shows the boy, "just as in dramas, when the threads of the action being presented become entangled in an inextricable knot, the so-called 'god from the machine' is brought forward upon the scene, accomplishing everything and making all more clear and understandable."

The prevailing opinion has been that the criticism of Aristotle was levelled chiefly, if not altogether, at Euripides. Schlegel says as much<sup>3</sup>: "This device was so used and abused by Euripides that, in nine out of his eighteen tragedies, a divinity descends to unravel the complicated knot." Moreover, it is implied always in the criticism, though one is not so sure that Aristotle held the view, that the use of it on the part of Euripides was due to lack of inventive skill in the handling of plot; in other words, that Euripides was a poor workman. The article in the *Philological Quarterly*, cited above, attempts to show that the use of the device by Euripides is to be explained not as a lack of inventive faculty, but as an intentional modification of dramatic technique, a modification made necessary by the poet's attempt to penetrate more deeply into the causes and results of human action. Three influences are seen to be at work in bringing about the new technique—Greek habits of thought in the interpretation of human action, the development of mechanical technique in the presentation of a drama, and the poet's own view of life.

Now while, as noted above, Horace is in agreement generally with the view that the superhuman ought not to be resorted to in the untangling of a plot, he evidently made some exceptions. What poets he had in mind, or what situations he conceived justified the appearance of the *deus* one cannot say. His theory of art, however, did permit it; this is implied in what he adds to his prohibition:

nisi dignus vindice nodus inciderit.

Aristotle, looking at the drama of his day, could not be sure that it had attained its final form. Perhaps Horace could see in the subjects and method of the dramatic poet of his day an occasional justification of the technique that was generally condemned. In the attempt "to hold the mirror up to nature," plots were found

that were deep and broad enough in conception to merit divine intervention.

Washington University,  
St. Louis, Missouri

THOMAS SHEARER DUNCAN

#### NOTES

1. Quoted by Erasmus, *Adagia* I, 1, 68.
2. *Corp. Script. Hist. Byz.*, ed. B. S. Niebuhr; vol. 10, p. 43.
3. *Dram. Lit.*, p. 138; Morrison's revision of Black's translation.

#### Horatius Ethicus I

Literary immortality is an elusive thing, and it is often difficult to predict what type of fame will attend an author in a subsequent age. Ovid, the gay poet of love and broken-hearted exile on the shores of the Euxine, could have a vision of his greatness in the years to come,<sup>1</sup> but even in the wildest flights of his active imagination he could not have dreamed that any subsequent age would ever look to him as an *arbiter moralium*. One can see a smile of amused incredulity steal over his face, if during his lifetime anyone had predicted to him that a day would come when profound allegorical interpretations would be placed on poems whose original purpose had been to entertain and in which an ethical purpose was manifestly lacking. It is well known, however, that such was the fate of Ovid, who many centuries after his death enjoyed high repute as a moral teacher, and the ethical interpretations put upon his writings are one of the curiosities of literary history.<sup>2</sup>

Although Ovid is not exactly at home in this moral setting, it does not seem so incongruous to consider Ovid's contemporary, Quintus Horatius Flaccus, in the light of an ethical teacher, and I am inclined to believe that this point of view deserves fresh consideration. The point of approach in this study will be an analysis of the ethical standards of Horace, involving necessarily some discussion of his philosophy, for with him the ethical and the philosophical are closely connected. This is not the most usual approach to the study of Horace. On the part of many students the Odes are the portion of his works that arouses the keenest interest, and the general resultant impression is that he was not a deep thinker, that his chief employment in life was centered in merriment and even frivolity, and that at heart he is an Epicurean, although at times he may masquerade in the garb of a mild Stoicism.

Let us first of all understand the background of the poet's life in an attempt to ascertain some of his fundamental attitudes. Like Vergil, Horace was essentially the product of the country, and the stamp of the country remained upon him to the end.<sup>3</sup> The early days in Venusia evidently gave him a background of solid appreciation of the genuine satisfactions of country life. The smoke, the din, the wealth of Rome were not the elements in his life that made the permanent appeal, but rather the patch of ground, where there would be a garden, and near the house an ever-flowing spring, and a bit of woodland. This natural love of the simple, elemental things was doubtless strengthened by the precept and example of his father. The period of study spent at Rome produced a very considerable effect upon

his character, for here his father was able to devote much more time to the moral development of his son than he had been able to do during the busy days when he was active as a *coactor* in Venusia. The poet's character, thus fostered and guided by his father, was ever after marked by an affectionate appreciation of the debt he owed him, and no subsequent social elevation effaced the deep impression then received.

For his intellectual progress, the period later spent at Athens, before joining the forces of Brutus, was probably even more significant. Only in one passage, to be sure, does Horace speak definitely of the contribution that the Athenian period made to his life, yet the countless references to different philosophical tenets found in his works clearly demonstrate the fact that the time in Athens was well spent and that he never forgot those lessons in philosophy in which he had been so well grounded. The very atmosphere of Athens was stimulating to a sensitive spirit.<sup>4</sup>

The period of study at Athens very probably brought home to Horace the full significance of his father's influence on the development of his moral nature, for while there he had doubtless learned from the works of Aristotle what a profound influence habit exerts in the formation of sound character. As Horace perused the works of the Stagirite and read how virtue results from habit, and further, of the supreme importance of being trained from childhood in one set of habits or another, there must have frequently recurred to his mind the many walks and talks he had enjoyed with his father; how his father had pointed out to him the folly of extravagance and impurity; and how he had told his son that his teachers of philosophy would give him the reasons for following the good life, but in the meantime it was his father's aim, during the formative period, to be of practical help in the building of a good character. He firmly believed that on this foundation his son would be able to rear the edifice of a noble life when he had attained to manhood. Apparently the father's hopes were not groundless, for Horace tells us that the training thus received resulted in a tendency to self-examination; that somewhat in the manner<sup>5</sup> recommended by the Golden Verses, he would at the end of the day review its events in turn and consciously exert himself towards self-improvement. In this determination he was again encouraged by Aristotle, who urges us to discover the errors to which we are prone and then drag ourselves in the opposite direction, for by steering wide of our besetting errors we shall be able to make a middle course. As a result of all this training and study the poet in later days evidently thought of himself as a good man, however faulty his character may have seemed to himself, and must seem to us when judged in accordance with the strictest present-day standards.

During the Athenian period it is reasonable to believe that Horace not only consolidated earlier gains but also acquired new standards. Among the ideas which produced the most profound impression on his mind was that of the brevity of human life and of the resultant necessity for quick action and the eager grasping of whatever joy the moment might afford. Needless to say,



this point of view, described most happily by the poet himself in the words *carpe diem*, has its distinct limitations. When one is convinced that there is little chance for a happy personal immortality, when progressive development in the spiritual realm is an undreamed-of condition, there is always the danger that a keen sense of the brevity of human life may result in the easy morals of the later forms of Epicureanism referred to by St. Paul.<sup>6</sup> As a matter of fact Horace's devotion to this *carpe diem* theory of life is a decided limitation, but considering the deficiencies of the philosophy in which he had been reared, it is not at all surprising that he held to this view.

Another of Horace's philosophical points of view may be traced to his studies in Athens. This is the attitude toward human life summed up in the words *nil admirari*, by which he means that sense of freedom from agitation which was so admired by the exponents of Stoicism, that ability to be unmoved in the midst of a collapsing universe; that freedom from excessive joy and sorrow. Doubtless this attitude had its value for a man trying to solve the mystery of existence without an adequate key, but again its defects are readily pointed out. The *nil admirari* doctrine deadens enthusiasm, it cuts the nerves of effort, and it militates against the accomplishment of great things for the benefit of mankind, by dampening the ardor of the enthusiast, of the man who is willing to suffer martyrdom, if need be, for the sake of a cause that is dear to his heart.

Most helpful among the philosophic doctrines that Horace made his own was that of the Golden Mean, a theme on which he loved to dwell. He had evidently imbibed from Aristotle, as well as from the general trend of Greek thought, the tendency to deplore excess and to realize the many practical advantages that accrue from a conscious pursuit of the *aurea mediocritas*. Aristotle had pointed out that temperance and courage are destroyed by excess on the one hand and deficiency on the other, while they are preserved by the observance of the mean. At one point, however, Horace seems not to have fully caught the spirit of the master. Aristotle had gone to some pains<sup>7</sup> to show that there can be no such thing as excess or deficiency in temperance and justice, because in such cases the mean is really in a certain sense an extreme; neither in the case of the opposite vices is there any possibility of the observance of the mean, or excess, or deficiency. Horace errs at this point, and, failing to recognize the essential quality of certain virtues and vices, seems to hold that the absolute, unswerving allegiance to even a noble end is undesirable if it transcends what he considers to be the proper limit.

We have now traced the main outlines of the philosophic views that Horace came to hold, and in general have seen that some of these concepts doubtless proved helpful to a mind that was not satisfied with a rigid adherence to the tenets of any one philosophical school, but naturally turned towards eclecticism; yet as pro-

viding assistance to the seeker for the good life to-day, they are rather negative and unsatisfactory.

(To be continued)

Ohio Wesleyan University, DWIGHT NELSON ROBINSON,  
Delaware, Ohio Whitlock Professor of Latin

#### NOTES

1. Ovid, *Metam.*, XV, 871 ff.
2. E. K. Rand, *Ovid and His Influence* (Our Debt to Greece and Rome Series), 131 ff.
3. It is interesting to note the remarks of Pliny the Younger at a somewhat later date, when he spoke of the wholesome life of *illa nostra Italia*, which still retained the old-fashioned Roman virtues and simplicity. *Epist.*, I, 14.
4. Cicero has said of Athens (*De Fin.*, V, ii, 5): *Quaecunque ingredimur, in aliqua historia vestigium ponimus.*
5. *Sat.*, I, 4, 105 ff. For a discussion of the Golden Verses, formerly ascribed to Pythagoras, see Schneeberger, *Die goldenen Sprüche des Pythagoras* (Münnerstadt, 1862).
6. I Cor., XV, 32.
7. *Eth. Nic.*, II, ii, 7; and II, vi, 20; cf. 18.

#### Father Geyser's *Musa Americana* and *Orator Latinus*

I. *Musa Americana*; Loyola University Press (3441 North Ashland Ave., Chicago, Ill.). Contains the Latin and the English on opposite pages.

1. *Patriotic Songs in Latin* (Paper; 47 pages; 25c); as "The Star-Spangled Banner"; "Come Back to Erin"; "Battle Hymn of the Republic"; "Just Before the Battle, Mother"; etc. 18 songs in all.

2. *Home Songs in Latin* (Paper; 64 pp.; 25c); as "The Last Rose of Summer"; "Home, Sweet Home"; "Sweet and Low"; "Massa's in the Cold Cold Ground"; etc. All 23 songs can be sung to the popular tunes.

3. *Latin Odes in Classical Metres* (Paper; 71 pp.; 25c); as "The Hurricane" (W. C. Bryant); "The Sparrow" (J. J. Daly); "The Lighthouse" (H. W. Longfellow); "Trees" (J. Kilmer). 17 odes in all.

4. *Vicus Desertus* (Paper; 33 pp.; 15c). A complete hexameter rendering of Oliver Goldsmith's "The Deserted Village."

5. *Julius Caesar, Fabula Shakespeariana* (Paper; 168 pp.; 60c). Done into accentual Iambic verse.

II. *Orator Latinus, Popular Selections for Public Delivery*, in both English and Latin. Allyn and Bacon; 97 pp.; \$1.00. Contains

1. *Orations*, as "Spartacus Rouses the Gladiators"; "Washington's Address to the American Soldiers Before the Battle of Long Island."

2. *Dramatic Scenes*; "Coriolanus," Act V, Scene 5; "Julius Caesar," Act IV, Scene 3.

3. *Latin Odes*; as "Lead, Kindly Light"; "A Psalm of Life"; "The Village Blacksmith"; etc.

The meaning of *σωφροσύνη* is best understood by its opposite, *ὑβρις*, which is the general spirit of setting oneself up against what is higher than oneself, whether by insubordination to constituted authority and divine law, or by the rebellion of the appetites against the law of reason. Thus this quality in some degree includes what we call humility. It is often said that the virtue of humility is not recognized in the Greek moral code, but the man who was *σώφρων* in regard to the gods would be the humble man, and the *ὑβριστικός* is the "proud man" in the language of the Bible.—R. L. Nettleship

**Remarks on English and Latin Tense Forms**

The English language is very deceptive in its use of the present tense. We often use a present tense where the thought is really future, and where the future or the future perfect tense is required in Latin. Likewise in compound forms care must be taken not to confuse the present with the past.

CAUTION I. An English present tense may be a disguised future or future perfect:

a) in conditional sentences, v.g., If you *ask* me for permission, I shall grant it: Si veniam *petiveris*, concedam.

b) with adverbs indicating future time, v.g., He *is going* to Chicago to-morrow: *Ibit*; or, The game *starts* at two o'clock: *Incipiet*.

CAUTION II. In English verb-forms containing a past participle with the present tense of the verb "to be," the thought is sometimes present, sometimes past. In trying to decide which it is, we must not confine our gaze to the grammatical form. We must delve down into the thought; we must if possible visualize the situation that is being described. We should ask ourselves this question: Does the verb express an action that is *still going on*, v.g., He is loved by all (*Ab omnibus amatur*), or does it express a present state which is the result of an action that *has already ceased*, v.g., He is wounded (*Vulneratus est*)?

N. B. If the participle *being* can be inserted without changing the sense, the time is present, otherwise it is past; v.g., in the first example above we can say: He is being loved; but in the second we cannot say: He is being wounded, without obviously changing the sense.

CAUTION III. The vivid present is used much more freely in Latin than in English. Hence a Latin present tense in an historical passage should usually be translated by an English past tense; v.g., Miltiades ad iter se parare iubet, should be rendered: He ordered the soldiers to make ready for marching.

**EXERCISE FOR DRILL**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. The house is built on a hill     | Perf. Domus in colle aedificata est   |
| 2. The roof is supported by columns | Pres. Tectum columnis sustentetur   |
| 3. He writes carefully              | Pres. Accurate scribit  |
| 4. He writes that he is well        | Perf. Se valere scripsit  |
| 5. The gate opens at two o'clock    | Fut. Porta hora octava aperietur  |
| 6. He is coming to the city         | Pres. In urbem venit (if now on the way)<br>Fut. In urbem veniet (if mere intention is meant) |
| 7. He is disgusted                  | Pres. Eum piget   |
| 8. He is disappointed               | Perf. Spes eum fefellit   |
| 9. He is despised by all            | Pres. Ab omnibus contemnitur  |
| 10. He is elected                   | Perf. Electus est   |

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 11. If he grants permission, I shall go   | Fut. Perf. Si veniam deriderit, ibo                                  |
| 12. If he is willing, I shall go          | Fut. Si volet, ibo   |
| 13. If he is sick, I shall go             | Pres. Si aegrotat (if he is now sick), ibo                           |
| 14. If he is banished, I shall go         | Perf. Si expulsus est (if he has been banished and is now gone), ibo |
| 15. If he makes a mistake, he corrects it | Perf. Si quid erravit, emendat                                       |

**THE IMPERFECT**

The Latin imperfect should not be used indiscriminately in translating an ordinary English past tense. It is justified only when the English uses the continuous past form, v.g., he *was walking*, or when the English contains the notion of commencing or trying, v.g., He was beginning to walk, He was trying to walk. (However, if the ideas of beginning or trying are at all important, they should be rendered by a special verb, v.g., *incipere*, *conari*.) The use of the imperfect in Latin often implies that the stage is being set for some new action that is to follow. Use the imperfect if you are getting ready to say: "and then something happened"; v.g., I was walking along the street. Suddenly a man ran up to me. Cf. Horace: *Ibam forte via sacra . . . occurrit quidam*. In general, the Latin imperfect *describes*, rather than merely *relates*, a past action: it signifies not merely what *happened*, but what *was going on* at some past time, expressed or implied.

University of Detroit,  
Detroit, Michigan

HUGH P. O'NEILL, S. J.

**Platonic Musings**

To an undergraduate engaged in the study of scholastic philosophy, how often does not "philosophy" mean little more than what Socrates calls "right opinion" (*ὀρθὴ δόξα*)—a body of doctrine, true, indeed, and glibly demonstrated by formal syllogisms, but hardly apprehended as the necessary explanation of the universe, to which the thinking mind imperiously compels us. But Plato saw clearly that right opinion, though it was the best that the average man could hope to attain, would never satisfy the aspiring soul which had received at birth an admixture of divine philosophy. For such a soul "knowledge" (*ἐπιστήμη, νόσις*) was the only thing worth striving for; not mere *intellectual* knowledge—which is little worth unless it rise to *realization*,—but what St. Ignatius of Loyola called *interne sapere res*. "Love of knowledge" can be a meaningless phrase: unless we *feel*—so Plato thought—we do not really *know*; there must be *ἔρως* in our knowledge, else it is not fully human. Our knowledge must become for us our life: we must *conceive* and *beget* the thing. Moderns are too often hopelessly the slaves of facts, phrases, systems, methods—as if it were any use for us, as men, to serve such abstractions, or promote them, or possess them! "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

F. A. P.



XI

de-

e is

(if

an-

now

em-

im-

ise.

ous

lish

He

ow-

im-

r.g.,

atin

new

are

l'';

nan

.

de-

sig-

on

S. J.

las-

ean

on''

lib-

ore-

, to

But

the

uld

at

h a

ing

re—

but

res.

un-

ow;

ally

ife:

too

ems,

erve

em!

.

P.